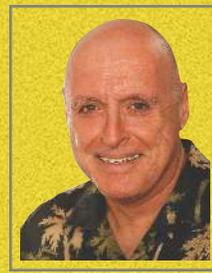


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



863 Situational Leadership Calls for Decisions

It's called Situational Leadership, and it changed how the world viewed leaders and their methods. I'm Jerry Roberts, and we'll talk about what situational leadership brought us. That's next, on The Extra Point.

Victor Frankl, an Austrian psychiatrist and philosopher, wrote this: "Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom."

I use Frankl's statement in my own leadership training. So did Stephen Covey, author of the 7 *Habits of Highly Effective People*. I saw Covey deliver a talk that included Frankl's observation, which he thought was incredibly powerful.

It says we have the power to escalate or deescalate a situation. It says we have the power to solve problems. It says we have the power to improve or destroy working relationships. Stimulus is what happens to us. Response is how we react to it.

Situational leadership first made its entrance into the world of work over 50 years ago, and it channels Frankl's views. Simplified, it offers that to be a good leader, you need to know how to adjust your leadership style depending upon the circumstances you're facing, and the people involved. In other words, leadership isn't like buying socks, where one size fits all.

Less experienced workers will likely need more attention than those with greater experience. Leading in a crisis requires a different approach than handling normal issues we face daily. The "situational" leader understands this, and is able to adapt quickly and effectively.

The four key styles in situational leadership are directing, delegating, supporting, and coaching. Each is unique and demands a unique response in the spirit of what Victor Frankl taught.

Whatever the stimulus is, our response has to be appropriate to the situation.

1. Directing is telling people what to do. When under stress to solve a critical problem, a leader may choose to use this method. It's also used when a worker is inexperienced and judged not yet ready to reason out solutions on their own. This is also known as the command style.

Using the directing style on a regular basis may be seen as being overbearing. As well, its overuse can limit growth in workers.

2. Delegating is assigning tasks to people who are able to handle varying levels of responsibility. It may start out similar to directing, when you're dealing with inexperienced workers. On the other end of the spectrum, you may have talent who need little to no direction and will deliver good results.

President Ronald Reagan said: "Surround yourself with the best people you can find, delegate authority, and don't interfere as long as the policy you've decided upon is being carried out."

3. Supporting is the style to use when you have people who have proven they can work independently.

One thing requires a mention. This is not the same as delegating a job to a trusted worker and walking away, knowing they'll come through for you. The leader may be called upon to provide backup in the form of resources, or just encouragement.

4. Coaching is helping the worker grow, so they can accept greater responsibility. Many people eventually burn out to a degree.

(Con't.)

When this happens, the leader can rebuild confidence, energy, and passion through a program to help the individual add or grow a skill.

I love this quote. "A good leader inspires people to have confidence in the leader; a great leader inspires people to have confidence in themselves." The words of Eleanor Roosevelt

In general, the experience of most leaders can effectively be divided up into these four elements: directing, delegating, supporting, and coaching.

Think about your team and their tasks today. As a manager, do you need to direct, delegate, support, or coach them through their next piece of work? How can situational leadership benefit you and your organization?

That's The Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts. ###

For information on training and consulting services with Jerry Roberts, please click this link: guamtraining.com

